

Ad-wise & Ways

Some Shun Anti-Cancer Jobs

By KENNETH McKENNA

When the American Cancer Society's advertising agency was casting for its television commercial campaign, about 80 actors and actresses were contacted for auditions. All but a few begged off.

The excuses were many, but what they boiled down to was this: a person who appears on TV commercials for a living is reluctant to cut himself off from a chance at cigaret advertising. With residuals, a tobacco spot can mean \$15,000 a year. For public service TV work, there's a one-time fee, explained Dick Lord, head of Lord, Geller, Federico & Partners.

Waitress a 'Find'

"We really had to scrounge for talent," Lord recalled. They did manage to sign up four professionals, who happened to be zealous anti-smokers. The rest were collected on a deadline basis from any source that could be found. At the last minute, agency employees were telephoning friends—anyone—for help.

The result was a merry crew

of performers who had nothing whatever in common: a copy chief, a photographer's representative, a TV announcer and a bearded spieler for Circle Line trips around Manhattan. In the tradition of show biz folklore, their prize find was an attractive waitress who worked in a restaurant near the studio where the commercials were filmed.

The Screen Actors Guild took one look at the commercials and blew off steam instead of smoke. "Why didn't you use professionals," a union representative asked indignantly. Lord explained. That was that.

The two commercials that Lord, Geller, Federico created for the Cancer Society have achieved a certain fame for the agency, which is barely a year-and-a-half old. One parodies "the pretty people, happy things, pretty places" approach affected by cigaret companies on TV. The other takes off on the standard

cowboy shootdown; the good guy is saved when the bad guys start coughing.

"We were making a presentation to a client," Lord said, "He kept saying, 'yeah, yeah,' until we came to the cancer commercials. He was surprised we had done them. We got the account."

Aid to Business

"They've been a big help in our business. They've let us demonstrate what we can do on TV."

For its upcoming efforts for the Cancer Society, Lord, Geller has a simple dodge to beat the actor gap. They are using drawings and cartoons. No live people. The most striking one shows a closeup of a hand pushing a coin into a cigaret machine. As the coin clinks, clinks down the slot, the camera quickly switches to a dice rolling, a whirling roulette wheel, race horses at the gate. Suddenly, back at the machine, a cigaret pack drops out. The announcer says: "You lose."

1002403265